KNAVE

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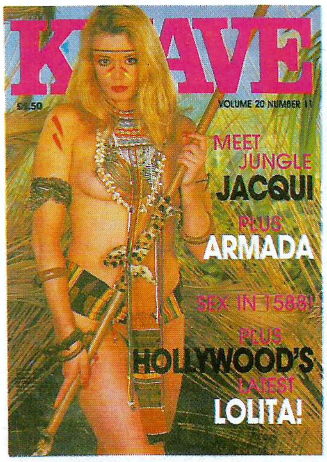
VOLUME 20 NUMBER 11



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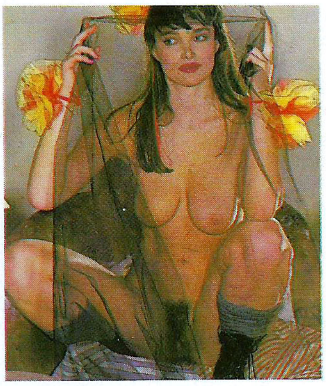

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ROVER
E721 MDU

Who said the British Car Industry was dead. *(I think it was a smarmy-looking estate agent in a BMW – Ed).* Don't you believe a word of it. As ROBERT DUDLEY shows in his latest no-holds-barred appraisal of Rover's Vitesse Fastback, there is plenty of barking life left in the old dog yet!

Admitting to motoring writer colleagues that you've a sneaking regard for a new car carrying the Rover 'viking' insignia (or the Austin Rover badge or the MG octagon for that matter) is a bit like standing up at a Prince concert and asking His Purple Highness to run through a medley of pre-war Vera Lynn tracks. The response can be either derisory or merely disparaging depending on the state of mind of the audience you are addressing.

For some reason, handing plaudits to the last of the British-owned car majors simply isn't done. Even when the firm does come up with something a bit special — and heaven knows it doesn't happen *that* often — there is a grudging reluctance to accept that anything produced this side of the Dover Ditch can compete with the exhalted creations of Munich and Ingolstadt.

What did Austin Rover ever do for us? What about the SD1 Vitesse, a major success on the track and one of the great British cars? Well, yeah, OK, I'll give you that one. SD1 Vitesse. But apart from the SD1 Vitesse, what did Austin Rover ever do for us? MG Maestro EFi? A vastly underrated package which gave such hot hatch kings as the Golf GTi and Corolla GT a run for their money — and far and away eclipsed lesser offerings like the XR2 and XR3i? Well... Ok Ok OK. But apart from the

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDY MORGAN

continued from the previous page

SD1 Vitesse and MG Maestro EFi what did Austin Rover ever do for us? What about the 'second generation' Montego Turbo? Eh? Montego Turbo. A three-box hot-rod so breathtakingly quick you could set out on the outward leg of a visit to the supermarket and meet yourself on the way coming back. Ok, point taken. Montego Turbo. But what I'm saying is, apart from SD1 Vitesse, MG Maestro EFi, and Montego Turbo what did Austin Rover ever do for us? What about anything powered by the M16 twin-cam engine — the company's first 16-valver since the days of the sporty Dolomite Sprint? Fair enough. All well and good. Granted. But apart from SD1 Vitesse, MG Maestro EFi, Montego Turbo, and anything powered by the Rover M16 engine, what did Austin Rover ever do for us...?

Leaving aside the philosophical arguments on whether the car's manufacturer has bastardised the Rover 'marque' by dropping on Eastern design of engine into its sporting flagship, there can't be many who would argue against the British company's claim to having produced its best all-rounder yet. Even those who are expecting just another Japanese car with a Viking badge might be in for a few surprises.

First big surprise is how much more purposeful the 'Fastback' looks that its rather bland saloon equivalent — particularly in the all-black format of our test vehicle. Unlike the four-door which fast sheds its character as soon as you move your line of sight toward its hind quarters, the sporty hatch comes across like an intelligent pot-pourri of SD1, BX and Quattro — i.e., a useful amalgam of some of the best loved car designs of the past few years.

It's a remarkable transformation bearing in mind that the car is almost wholely derived from the platework of the 800 saloon. The only new body bits are the re-shaped roof, the hindquarter panels and its complete tailgate section (which sits, as a matter of interest, at an angle of 18 degrees, identical to the old SD1). Granted, the new car doesn't have quite the same aggressive sweep as the previous big Rover, a violently expressive vehicle which drew its inspiration from the Ferrari Daytona and a mid-60's styling exercise on the BMC 1800 by the Pininfarina design studio of Italy. Nevertheless, it is undeniably modern, fairly distinctive and full of natty design touches like the way in which the lower edges of its glasswork line up at the same level all the way round the car.

Below that low, deceptively-streamlined bonnet is the 2.7 unit which grew out of Honda Motor's much-criticised 2.5 litre six-pot. Working up a respectable lather of 177bhp at 6,ooorpm, and a super soapy 168lb ft of torque at 4½ K revs, the 'oversquare" overhead-cam 'Vee' displaces 2675 'cubes', some 181 more than the original design. Motive force is fed to the front axle via five sporting cogs and a stick change — or an optional four-speed electronic 'box featuring Honda's S-plus-S4 sports lock-up gimmick.

This hi-tech, electronic multi-point fuel-injected package provides the key to the whole character of the new car and foreshadows the way it acquits itself on the test track. When the previous SD1 Vitesse débuted in 1983, its Buick-derived all-alloy 3528cc pumper put out 190bhp at 5280rpm and 220lb ft of torque at 4,000rpm for a top speed of 135mph and 0-60mph acceleration in around 7½ secs (Rover claimed 7.1 secs but most testers found this difficult to achieve given that the car didn't have a limited slip differential to control the — not inconsiderable — wheelspin).

This time around, the performance claims are a top speed of 140mph and the headlong dash from rest to three-score in 7.6 secs. There's plenty of talk about the car being the fastest production Rover ever produced, but such pub talk is, in a sense, irrelevant. What is much more important is the way in which our 'Vitty' delivers the Danish.

Gone is the delicious burbling sound of the American V8. Instead, the new unit has an electric motor-like lust for revs and a silence which is quite astonishing for its size and power. It is also pretty abstemious on the 4-star front. Typically boisterous Knave motor-testing — including a foot-through-carpet burst to the south coast with the pustular Gutto in tow — yielded a well-wellied 24.4mpg. To settle further arguments, the last SD1 tested by this writer managed 22.3mpg for a period of similar abuse (albeit *sans* acromegalic anchorman) *(acro-flippin'-what? — Ed.)*

That well-sorted is the new car, that it is just at home on twisting, tortuous A-roads as it is hurtling up the autobahn at speeds in excess of three figures. The old rear-wheel-drive Vitesse numbered 'entertaining handling' among its biggest biggest distinguishing features. Understeering strongly to the limit, it would quickly switch to oversteer and swing its tail alarmingly unless such progress was held in check by judicious use of the throttle. This 800 Vitesse is a much different proposition. Setting its course in a predictable fashion — neutral then mild understeer building to the limit — the FWD is never less than competent but lacks the sporting flavour of its predecessor for better or worse. The ultimate verdict must depend on your level of enthusiasm.

Otherwise, the car holds itself together well with no floppiness at the rear end, cornering as if on rails. The ride too, is first rate, echoing the small Jaguar feel of the cockpit. Only around town does the discerning pilot pick up on the succession of tarmac tumours which seem to be par for the course across the UK. Noise levels are commendably low, despite a certain amount of wind rush from around the door mirrors.

The only jowl drooper is the Mogadon cocktail vagueness of the Honda-designed power steering. Despite the state-of-the-art Japanese input, the arrangement is actually less successful than the Positive Centre Feel set-up developed by Austin Rover and TRW Cam Gears for the 2.0 litre versions of the cars. The good thing about the PCF version is that is provides for a fair amount of road 'feel' at low velocities. There is no such tactile feedback from the Honda system. Indeed at low speeds on the open road you can be moved into wondering whether the leather-bound steering wheel is indeed connected to anything or whether you are simply guiding the thing by a mixture of intuition and the benevolent oversight of The Almighty.

Grip, on the other hand, is excellent. The new Vitesse enlists the services of the same rubber ration as the 'hot SD1 — 205/60 VR rated roundblacks on 15in alloy rims — which stick to the highway like the rubber suckered Garfield to the windscreen of the 1.6 litre rep-mobile you just passed in third gear. Brakes, larger and more powerful than those used on the Honda car and featuring second generation Bosch ABS, are superb.

If the Vitesse is a highly competent all-round package, standout feature has to be the mute flexibility of the 24-valver. Incredibly, it will pull the 3135lb machine — in top gear — from barely double mph figures all the way to the upper reaches of the rev quadrant. That's pretty hot by any standards and says a lot for the basic soundness of the Honda design. From its 'vow of silence' quietness at idle — it is often difficult to tell whether the engine is actually

Continued on page 21

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switched on — through to the point where the rev limiter yells "ouch!", it just goes and goes. And goes. Like a thing possessed. Only quieter.

Allied to the effortless performance is the inherent versatility of the hatchback design. There's plenty of room 'up back', albeit not as much as there might have been since as with BMW's 3 Series estate, the need to optimise handling — the rear light clusters act as a buttress to stiffen the rear end — was seen as more important than allowing for the luggage swallowing potential of a Pickfords van. Hence the compromise on rear-end accessibility, particularly the tail loading lip which, while cut low between the rear headlamp clusters, is actually a good few inches above the load floor proper. Mr Shifter-mobile this is not, but does it really matter? Rear seat folded, there's still a whopping 50cu ft, which is far and away above what most other manufacturers are offering. That's plenty practical for us and certainly proved capacious enough on the Knave shoot to accommodate the gourmand delicacies of El Gutto's packed lunch, to whit, a roast ox, two dozen 'high' pheasants and three buckets of pink custard. (Not to mention the crate of Old Guttburbler's Rancid Polecat Pilsner the gross 'G' always insists accompanies him on such 'days out'). The old car, for the record, swallowed a maximum of 35.4cu ft, seat down, and had more 'lip' than a bus-load of Liverpudlian schoolgirls.

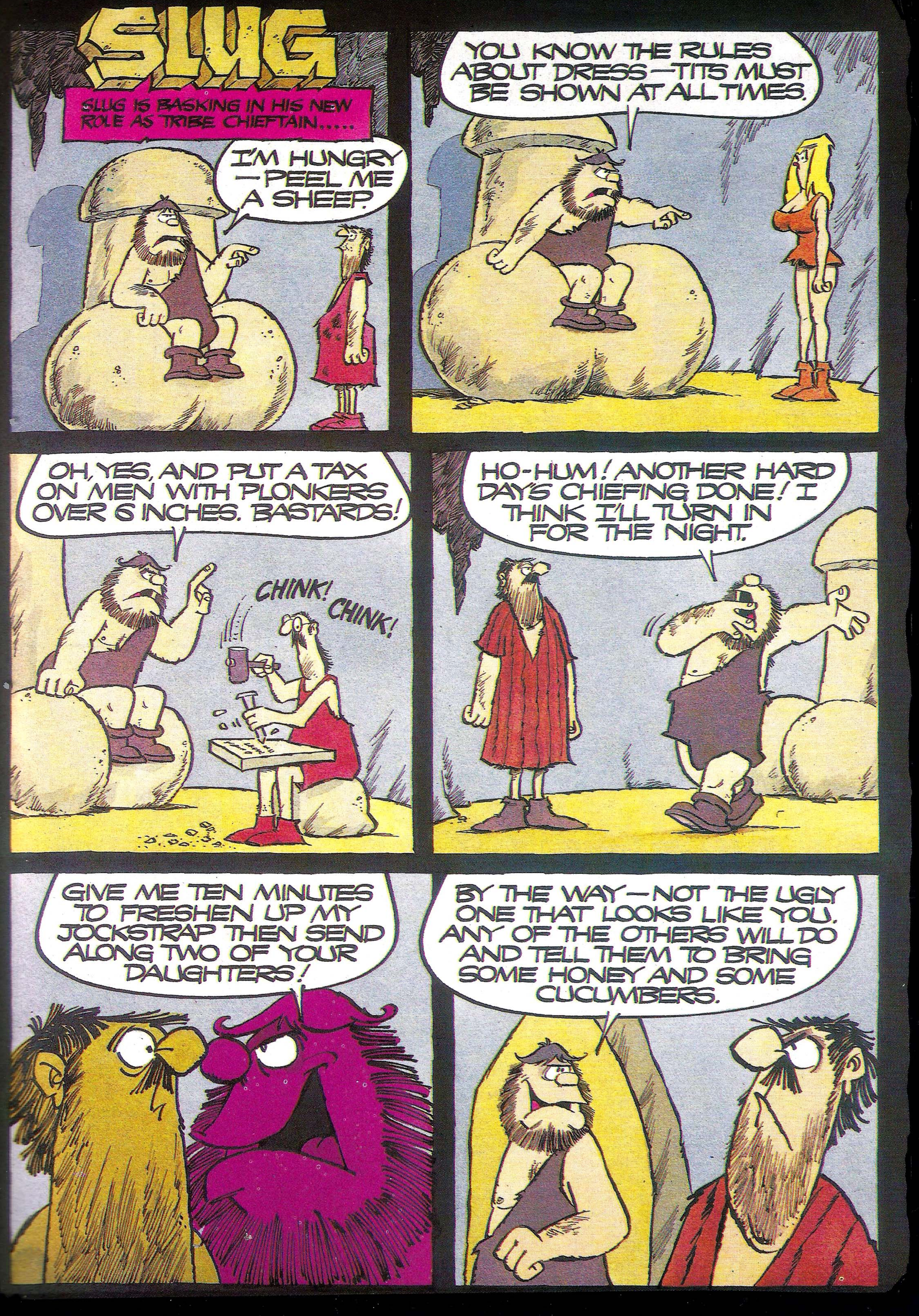
The lack of a split rear seat is a surprising omission for a car in the Vitesse's class. Particularly when you bear in mind that this one *faux pas* apart, there are plenty of clever detail touches to prove that the Japanese do not hold the monopoly on innovation. The windscreen wipers, for example, duck down under the level of the bonnet when not in use. The infra-red locking unit, too, is one of the best we've come across. Just compare it with the similar but largely ineffective effort found in Honda's coupé half-brother, and you come away with the refreshing conclusion that, for once, the Europeans have beaten the Japs at their own game.

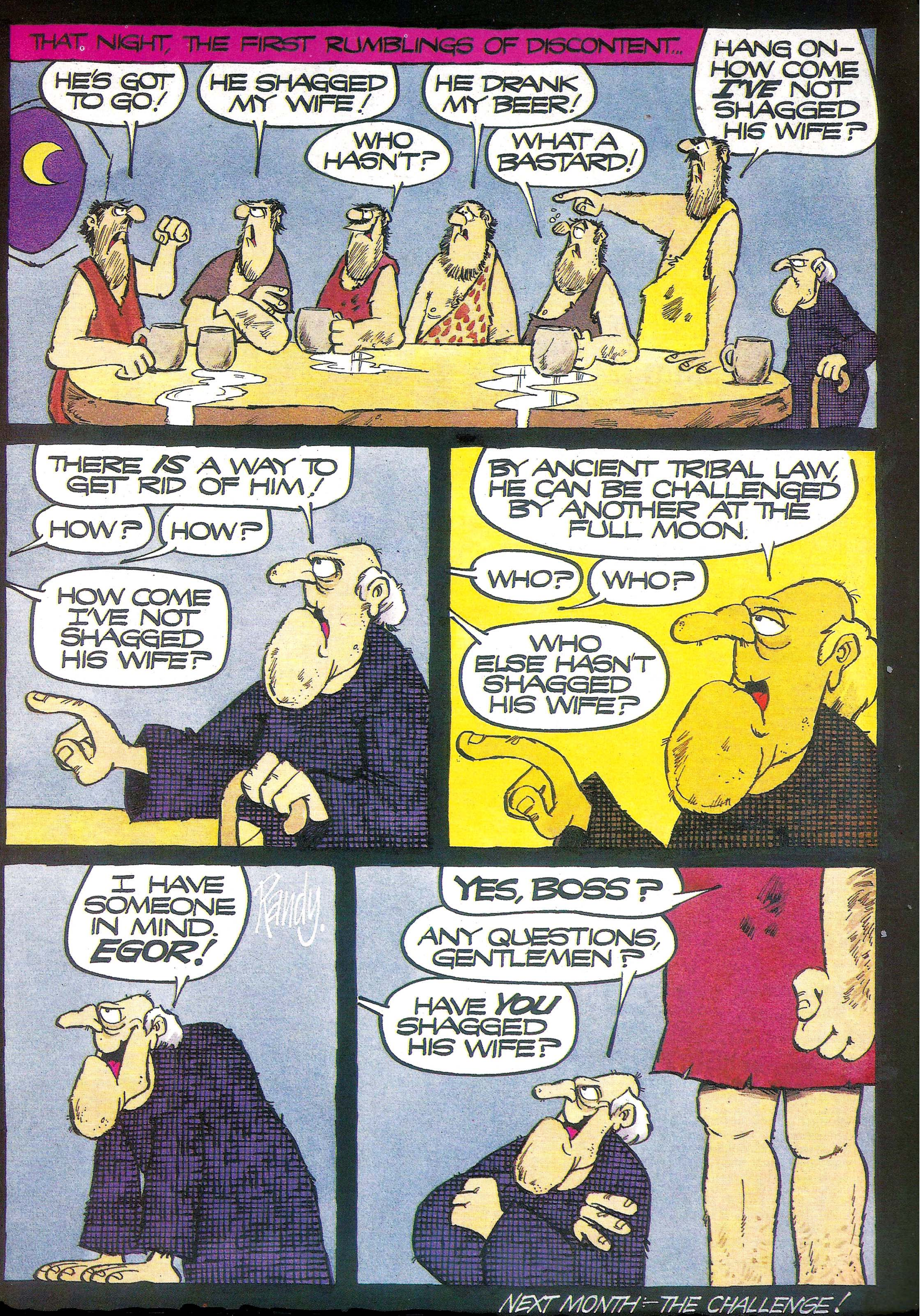
Inside, too, the Vitesse has more goodies than an Argos catalogue. With its phenomenal eight speaker stereo system, multi-adjustable seats and the usual roster of electrically-assisted vandoobreys, including an on-board computer, the car combines the creature comforts of your favourite armchair with the agility of a Lear Jet. Add to this the excellent soft touch dashboard (the best available at any price and the subject — so rumour has it — of admiring overtures from Porsche) clear, comprehensive instrumentation and faultless driving position you can see the justification in Rover's proud boast that their 800 is the best equipped British motor ever built. For a UK manufactured car, it is also surprisingly well bolted together, too. No hangy-off bits on this one, thank you very much.

Of course it is not all plain sailing. What car ever is? As with the old SD1, cranial clearance is really pretty dreadful — a legacy, perhaps of the Japanese design parameters established for the original 800 saloon. This is an especially bad oversight when you consider that the saloon was aimed, as much as anyone, at the man mountains *(Shouldn't that be 'men mountain?' — Asst. Ed.)* of the US of A. It is even more astonishing given Rover Group itself numbers some veritable 'human giraffes' among its top brass. and while we're totting up the thumbs down column, just take a look at those cheap looking heater control slides. Luxury design? They are not so much Storehouse as poor house. A pity, since generally the Rover's cockpit is a great place to spend a high-speed motoring afternoon.

And the same holds for the rest of the car — as long as you're not expecting a red-blooded road monster. Sure, the new car is 100 per cent more refined than its uncompromising predecessor, but then that in a sense was what made the old David Bache-styled brute such fun. Rover Vitesse Mark One was well hard. A raw beast. A real kick-'em-in-the-teeth-and-run Charles Bronson of a car. Rover/Honda Vitesse Mark Two, on the other hand, is fast, impeccably civilised, immeasurably better executed and that much more predictable. For some that may be a turn-off. Real fans of the old SD1 might feel that the latest incarnation is just too sophisticated, too measured to do justice to the Vitesse nameplate. Perhaps they have a point. The previous Vitesse 'proper's (we'll draw a discreet veil over Rover's S-series skit on the Honda Ballade — or 200 Series as it's known here) was carefully engineered to provide sporting performance combined with the sort of handling you would expect of a race bred machine. There is no way that the new car — yet to prove itself on the race circuit — can compete with that kind of heady scenario.

On the other hand you cold do a lot worse than opt for the all-round verve and versatility of the 800 Vitesse. It is a machine which looks as good on the autobahn as it does on the driveway yet doesn't buck the lock-on, lock-off challenge of a winding Cornish single-tracker. A car next to which some of its executive express rivals have all the sporting agility of an old rasta on a skateboard. In short, a vehicle which allows its British manufacturer to compete head-on with the likes of Audi, Mercedes and BMW... and come away not looking like too much of the poor relation. And make no mistake about it, Japanese running gear or no Japanese running gear, this is in no way a Vikingised, badge-engineered Honda. Need we add that at under £20,000, it is also something of a Viking bargain!


SLUG
SLUG IS BASKING IN HIS NEW ROLE AS TRIBE CHIEFTAIN.....
I'M HUNGRY —PEEL ME A SHEEP!
YOU KNOW THE RULES ABOUT DRESS—TITS MUST BE SHOWN AT ALL TIMES.
OH, YES, AND PUT A TAX ON MEN WITH PLONKERS OVER 6 INCHES. BASTARDS!
CHINK! CHINK!
HO-HUM! ANOTHER HARD DAY'S CHIEFING DONE! I THINK I'LL TURN IN FOR THE NIGHT.
GIVE ME TEN MINUTES TO FRESHEN UP MY JOCKSTRAP THEN SEND ALONG TWO OF YOUR DAUGHTERS!
BY THE WAY—NOT THE UGLY ONE THAT LOOKS LIKE YOU. ANY OF THE OTHERS WILL DO AND TELL THEM TO BRING SOME HONEY AND SOME CUCUMBERS.

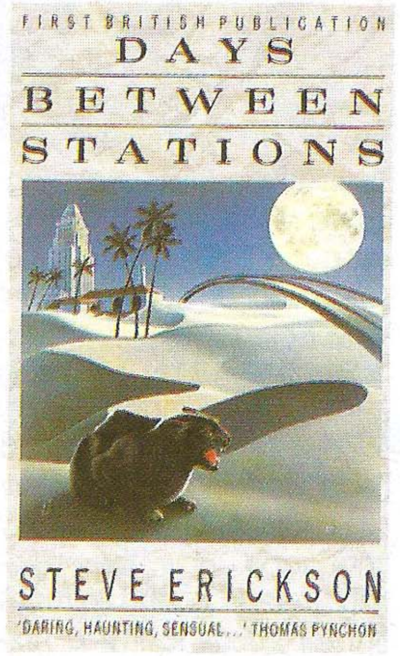

THAT NIGHT, THE FIRST RUMBLINGS OF DISCONTENT...
HE'S GOT TO GO!
HE SHAGGED MY WIFE!
WHO HASN'T?
HE DRANK MY BEER!
WHAT A BASTARD!
HANG ON— HOW COME I'VE NOT SHAGGED HIS WIFE?
THERE IS A WAY TO GET RID OF HIM!
HOW?
HOW?
HOW COME I'VE NOT SHAGGED HIS WIFE?
BY ANCIENT TRIBAL LAW, HE CAN BE CHALLENGED BY ANOTHER AT THE FULL MOON.
WHO?
WHO?
WHO ELSE HASN'T SHAGGED HIS WIFE?
I HAVE SOMEONE IN MIND. EGOR!
Randy
YES, BOSS?
ANY QUESTIONS, GENTLEMEN?
HAVE YOU SHAGGED HIS WIFE?

NEXT MONTH:—THE CHALLENGE!

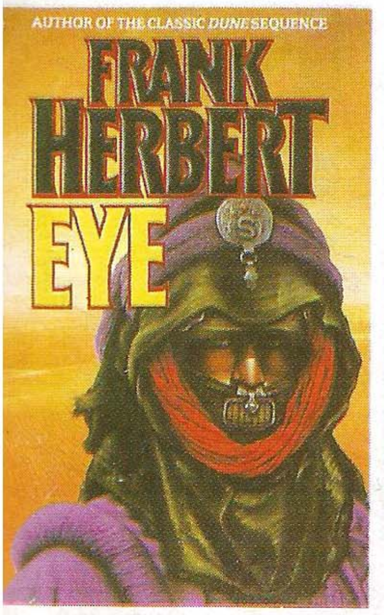
dimensions as the mythical Talisen and his story begin to intrude into Jasmin's worried and tangled mind.

Holistic First Aid *(Optima, £5.99)* by Dr Michael Nightingale is an excellent alternative to the run-of-the mill medical encyclopaedia which normally lurks on everyone's bookshelf. There's an ailment list which makes great browsing for hypochondriacs and those looking for six months off work on full-pay. The suggested remedies have the benefit of being of the natural medicine, drug-free variety – typically homoeopathic - with suggestions about diet, mental good health, meditation, yoga, acupuncture etc. Eminently readable and just as sensible.

Steve Erickson's ***Days Between Stations*** *(Futura, £3.99)* evokes some of the same emotions. It's got weirdness neatly dovetailed into every twist of the plot.


FIRST BRITISH PUBLICATION
DAYS
BETWEEN
STATIONS
STEVE ERICKSON
'DARING, HAUNTING, SENSUAL...' THOMAS PYNCHON

Spanning America and Europe, this book flows around any number of icons. Love, death and loss are the lot of the protagonists in a story where time seems irrelevant and personal identity impermanent. It's compelling and adventurous fiction.



The late Frank Herbert, author of *Dune* is rightly held in esteem by people inside and outside the SF field. ***Eye*** *(New English Library, £3.95)* is a collection of short stories demonstrating Herbert at his best. Illustrations are provided by Jim Burns. If you've forgotten how powerful the short story can be, pick up this volume and remind yourself – it's that good.

Charles Warren

Movies

Big Business stars the inimitable Bette Midler, – what a woman! She's a female pantechnicon, a combination of everything that's most daunting, yet loveable, about Jewish womanhood. She'd scare the pants off anything from a rabbi to an Ayatollah, whether she's playing an old-timey Yiddisher Momma stuffing the family with gefilte fish and apfelstrudel, or a modern Manhattan go-getter wibble-wobbling along on smart heels like Spanish castanets. She's a misguided missile of ego-energy, a real Me-Generation Ms., but her eyes lollop up and around like Mae West of old, and there's something oddly dependent about her, too, just as there was about dear old Oliver Hardy. They both need to be teamed up with a thin sad one, and somehow you reckon that, underneath it all, they need the person they put upon as badly as vicky versy. One day I hope Ms Midler will partner Miss Woody Allen, and she'd certainly tone up his soul a lot better than all this Weep-along-with-Woody highbrow stuff he's drooped into lately. In this film, her Thin partner is Lily Tomlin, who's really quite a different kettle of comedienne, with a refined, sad, Woody-ish streak too, but they play together pretty well, and this film's dazzling gimmick is to double the dose. Lily and Bette not only play two big business Mizzes closing down a company town for insufficient profits, they also play the defiant union maids who come storming into Wall Street and square up to them. Eyeball to eyeball. Bosom to bosom. It's real good fun, even if not quite in the class of *Nine To Five.*

Sticky Fingers features another pair of Manhattan ladies on the rampage, this time two poor-but-hip chicks from Greenwich Village. Helen Slater and Melanie Mayron are buskers (classical) who get lumbered with a bag full of Mafia money, and can't resist spending it. The yarn is almost as improbable as those Madonna pictures, but never mind the plot, look at the pictures. Especially these leggy lookers, whose wardrobe is equally eye-popping, whether it's Oxfam Baroque or Nouveau-Riche No-No. Oh, those lemon satin gloves, and – ouch! those ear-rings cascading practically down to nipple-level. Femme director Caitlin Adams leans over backwards and busts her braces trying to combine traditional fluff-head comedy routines with feminist emphasis on female buddy-buddies rubbing along. The males are marginal, just sex-objects with smouldering looks and more excuses than a cat has fleas.

The ladies in ***A Summer Story*** are beautiful too, in a cool, luminous, English way. But feminine beauty plays second fiddle to the countryside, as was, in this loving and lavish-looking reconstruction of the West Country 1902, with its thickly-hedged fields, its thickly thatched cottages, its heavily-maned horses, its canary-yellow cartwheels, its seaside families with frilly caps and shrimping-nets, and rich, ripe, Elgar-ish, cellos on the soundtrack. James Wilby is the poetic lawyer, Imogen Stubbs is the farmer's daughter, and the story is so old, it's new again: how the English class system grabs them by the short and curlies and pulls them apart. At first the film dawdles, but the last fifteen minutes are a little miracle, as a sequence of little details – a slow bank clerk, a train missed by seconds, two intersecting strolls along a sunny promenade – epitomise the 1001 sly ways in which class prejudice keeps nice people slaves for life.

No-Man's-Land whisks up back to 1988 L.A. An undercover rookie cop goes undercover to bust the gang that specializes in the purloining of Porsches. Porsche fetishists will be drooling in the aisles. This non car-freak realised for the first time how sexy the classic curved Porsche is – it's just an ass behind and two tits in front, going vroom-vroom. Leading lady Lara Harris is a traffic-stopper too. The male leads reminded me of *Less Than Zero:* both films try to concoct a new type of hero: after the teeny-bopper, the yuppie-bopper. Now about those cars, *(Continued on p.937).*

Eddie Hartley

Movie Of The Month

Watching my lady-love the other day, I realised what the trouble with women is. They're a different species altogether. They're a species that, like the cat, has domesticated Man and taught him to provide it with cream, cat's meat and centrally heated laps. In return, it enjoys rubbing its fur against your short leg while purring loudly. It's a little-known fact, that when a pussy moistens and brims over, it's instinctively marking you as its property with secretions from a hidden gland. Not many people know that. If you ask me, the two species also come from alien planets. They come from beyond Venus, we come from beyond Mars. When they've satisfied us out of our five senses and our tiny minds, and they're sure we're fast asleep and dead to the world, they relax on the recharge, and revert to their normal form. Which is what, you would naturally like to know? Well, think of a black hole, only, a woman is a purple and mauve one... I was just about to find out more when I woke up. I'd dozed off after seeing ***Drowning By Numbers,*** which is very much about the delicious sex being strange and sinister under the raspberry delight.

If this film tickled my fancy, it's not for being erotic as for being so weird it tickles parts of the imagination that only bent feather-dusters can reach. I'm still hesistating about making it Film of the Month, as hordes of irate readers might besiege the editor to demand their money back *(Ho Ho, – Ed.)* So, I'll do my best to describe it – see if it's your cup of tea-and-cyanide. A mother (Joan Plowright), her daughter (Juliet Stevenson), and her grand-daughter (Joely Richardson) have two things in common. They all have a thing about drowning their husbands, which they do in a bath, while playing beach-cricket, and in a swimming-pool, respectively. They all have the same, highly improbable name, namely, Cissie Colpitts. When the crown coroner (Bernard Hill) warns them against pushing coincidence too hard, they prick-tease the poor old chap something terrible, take him out in a row-boat at night, and mesmerise him into doing an uggle-guggle job on himself. You don't believe it? There's more... Other unusual hobbies include re-staging famous fatal accidents from the history of cricket.

It's a very luscious film scenically, and sumptuous photography bathes the venal ladies in a gorgeous honey'glow. If, like me, you play along with it, you'll end up seriously pondering such nutty things as the teen-age Cissie saying to her suitor, "I'll marry you on two conditions, that you learn to swim, and never enter me from the front..." Sometimes it reminded me of that great cult puzzle-piece, Patrick McGoohan's *The Prisoner,* which was also about strange seaside goings-on. Sometimes it was more like the sort of thing Agatha Christie might have written if she'd never come back from her famous disappearance, but gone completely round the twist instead, and spent the rest of her days in a loony bin scribbling a million-page detective story that could no more make sense than some nervy cocaine-dream. At the press show, the publicity man seemed somewhat beboggled about how to present it. He said: "This film was received, er, respectfully, at Cannes, but we'd like it to be received with less respect, and more laughter." For my part, I chuckled a lot, mostly to myself. So, if you like the sound of it, give it a whirl. Only, take your thinking cap, or, better still, your extra heads, along with you, and, just in case, an alarm-clock. By the way, this smarty-pants picture does miss one trick. The numbers mentioned in the title are illustrated in the course of the film, in different ways, and go up to 100, but the film does nothing imaginative to celebrate No. 69.

Eddie Hartley

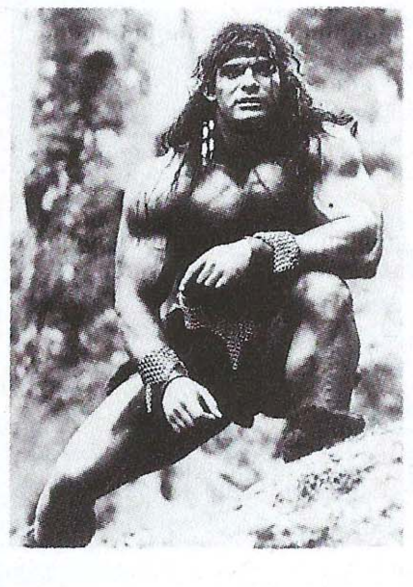
Videos

If you enjoy sword and sorcery movies, there's a stack of fun to be had with ***The Barbarians*** *(Warner Home Video)* which features a couple of muscle-bound heroes who make Conan look like a Nobel Prize-winning scientist. These two chaps come in the very wide shape of David and Peter Paul, otherwise known as wrestling champions The Barbarian Brothers.

The plot revolves around a tribe called the Ragniks, whose possession of a magical ruby imbues them with secrets of joy and music, enabling them to wander the world as a troupe of talented entertainers. When the Ragnik caravan is overtaken by brigands, Queen Canary entrusts the ruby to one of her subjects, who escapes and runs off to hide the jewel in a secret place.

Katchek and Gore, young orphan brothers adopted by the Ragniks, bite off the fingers of the villain ruler, Kadear. Instead of killing them, Kedear hands them over to Dirtmaster, a slave trainer who conditions the boys to kill each other. When the lads are about twenty years older (but no one else in the film has aged a jot, surprisingly) they are pitted against each other in a gladiatorial contest.

But the brawny retards belatedly recognise one another and together break out of captivity, their mission: to free Canary from Kadear's harem, retrieve the ruby from a dragon's lair and return its powers to the Ragniks. Much swordplay, jokey gore and an extremely tacky dragon lead heroes and villains to a final confrontation.



This *Deathstalker*-ish drivel will provide stacks of laughs for aficionados, and boasts the added attraction of reuniting baddie-for-all-seasons Richard Lynch *(Invasion USA)* and bald psycho Michael Berryman *(The Hills Have Eyes)* who played together in the stalk 'n' slasher *Cut and Run.* Amusing hokum.

Speaking of stalking and slashing, there's a fair portion of carve-ups in ***Twisted Nightmare*** *(RCA/Columbia)* which should suit readers who are showing signs of *Friday 13th* starvation, even if non-fans would find elements of the plot all too familiar.

A bunch of American teenagers are invited to a free weekend at Camp Paradise, which is an overblown name for a couple of cabins plus a sauna and icehouse set on the edge of a forest wilderness (you'd never have guessed) with a bit of a lake thrown in for mandatory good measure. The last time all of the participants were together at the venue, their holiday ended in tragedy when a retarded boy they were teasing staggered out of the barn in a ball of flame, never to be seen again.

What surprises everyone is that the victim's lovely sister, who they thought held them responsible for the drama, has also shown up and is looking as happy as pie. Still, they think nothing of it (I'd be running like hell by now, but then I've seen lots of these films before) and get on with having a good time.

But it's not long before the young couples start to find themselves dispatched to the hereafter (not that their fellows notice it) in an imaginative enough variety of gory ways. What does the old Indian up the hill know about it? Is the sister involved? Is there such a thing as a werebear? Is the retarded brother really dead? Why do these films always show at least two or three of the girls taking showers or saunas?

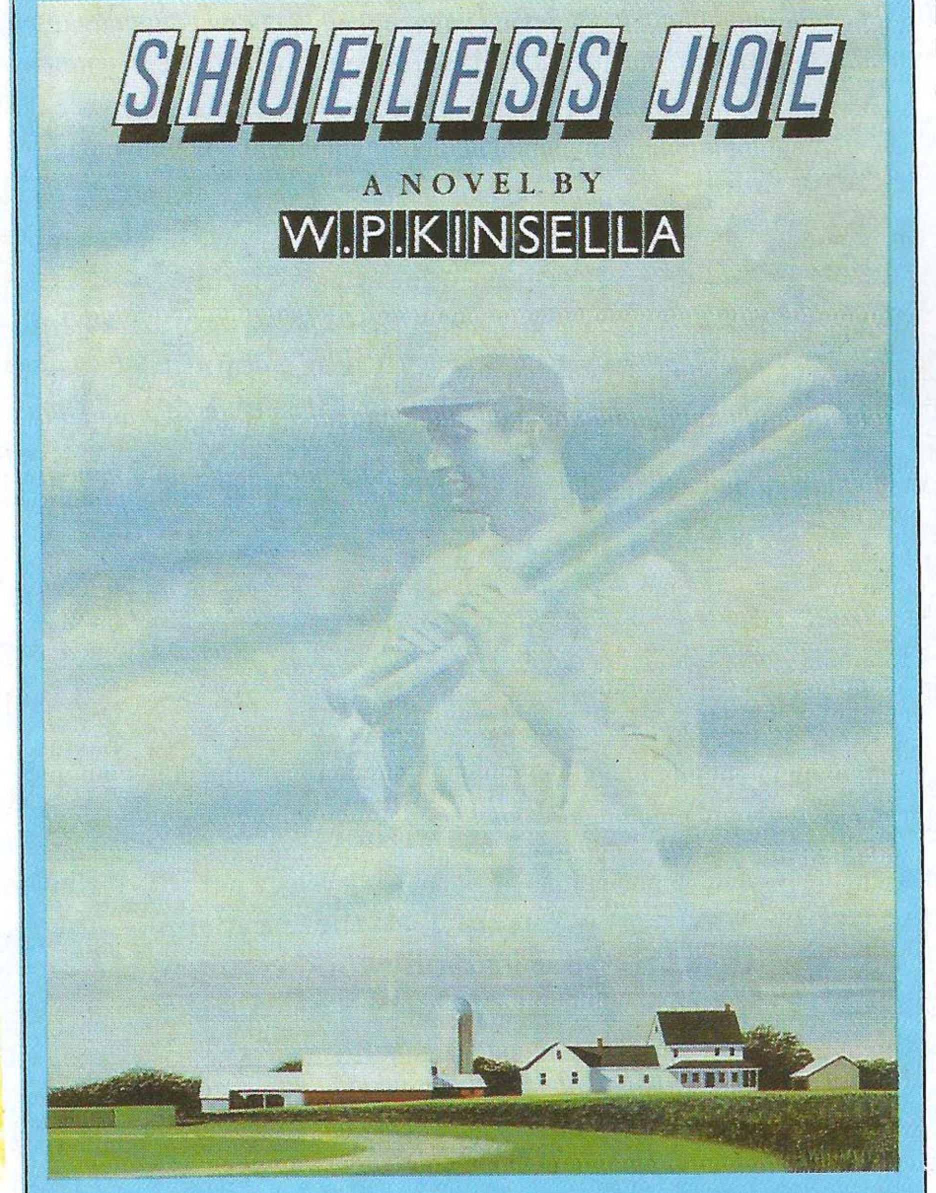
If you enjoy your slice and dice movies and are not overly-critical when it comes to filched plots and thin dialogue, then it is worth your while watching to find out the answers to at least some of those questions.

Sticking with the supernatural is a suitable route to catch up on a couple of Medusa Home Video's other late summer/early autumn releases, both of which – as it happens – also share an antipodean setting.

In ***The 13th Floor,*** a 20-year-old girl and her drop-out friends camp out in the thirteenth storey of a busy office block – a floor left empty because every company that rents it suffers commercial disaster, and because the power system seems to have a mind of its own.

It is more than a coincidence that Heather Thompson has turned up in this particular setting, because it was on this floor of the then half-finished building that she, as an eight-year-old, saw her father murder a young boy by throwing him into the power generator. Now her old man is a state premier (standing for re-election) and radical Heather has stolen documents which would finish his political career if published.

Book Of The Month



W.P Kinsella is an award winning Canadian writer with a love of baseball. His novel **Shoeless Joe** *(Allison & Busby, £11.95)* is one of those remarkable books that ought to be on everyone's list of required reading. On the face of it, a book about a baseball crazy farmer from Iowa who's not so hot on growing corn, but is a brilliant dreamer, may not sound riveting. But this particular farmer, Ray, doesn't just dream. He lives his dreams and peoples them with real people like his wife and daughter, but also with people who, while they're just as real, are not of this time and place.

Events really take off, when he starts to build his own baseball diamond in a field next to the farm house. Before too long, ghosts of the baseball greats begin to appear, a spectral team starts to form including the guy's own dead father. Driven by something – fate, destiny or something more nameless and even odder – Ray finds himself driving across the country to pick up famed, recluse and author J.D. Salinger to take him to a baseball game and then back to the diamond in Iowa. On the way they investigate and meet some more ghosts from the baseball past. Their trip back to Iowa is ... strange.

Back at the farm, Ray finds that his mortgage has been foreclosed at the behest of his avaricious brother-in-law. Crisis mounts on crisis as he sees the possibility of his magical diamond being flattened by the developers' bulldozers. And right at the finale ... things get very strange again.

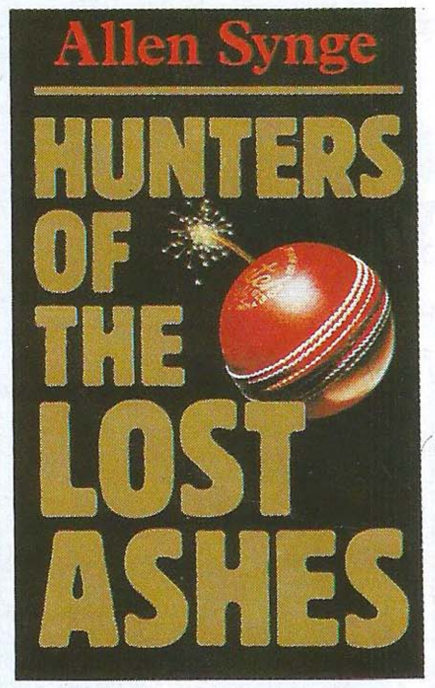
It's the mixture of essential weirdness and strong characterization that make this book so utterly engrossing. On one level it's a combination of sentimentality and fantasy that borders on the whimsical, at the same time it's shrewd, perceptive and almost unbearably realistic. Those qualities, combined with some truly majestic writing make this a book to treasure.

Charles Warren

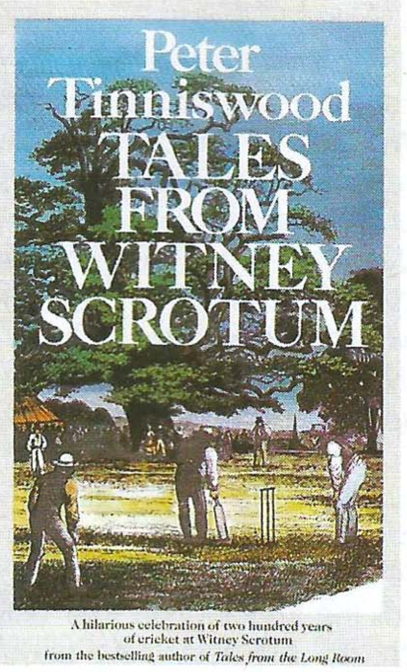
Books

James Robertson's *Any Fool Can* ... books have always held a special attraction. It's something to do with the way someone who's been a journalist, broadcaster and advertising agent attempts to slip into the rural good life, take up pig farming, dairy farming or whatever and makes every conceivable mistake. **Any Fool Can Be A Yokel** *(Headline, £2.50)* finds our ex-townie firmly ensconced in country life. It's a collection of tales about the assorted rustics who orbit the village local. Retired colonels, retired colonels' wives who suddenly take off for Greenham, commune dwellers, gossips, know-alls, bores and drunkards. It's a very funny account of misplaced characters and all too believable situations: like the sex-aids party to raise cash for the church clock repair fund. Humour in the fantasy genre is mostly unintentional, apart from the irreverent likes of someone like Terry Pratchett. Craig Shaw Gardner's **A Malady Of Magicks** *(Headline, £2.99)* is firmly in the Pratchett mould of tongue-in-cheek, merciless piss-taking. Ebenezum is a wizard of great refute: The trouble is that he's afflicted with a malady – namely, everytime there's sorcery in the air, he takes off on a sneezing bout. This threatens to interfere with that most noble of wizardish arts – casting a few spells and demanding a very large fee for services rendered. Ebenezum, and Wuntvor, his apprentice, have no alternative but to travel for the fabled city of forbidden delights – Vushta. On their way, they have to contend with assassins, downfalls of dead haddock in enclosed spaces, used-weapons, sales-demons, very minor deities, chickens that lay golden turds, trial by custard ... it's absurd and great fun.

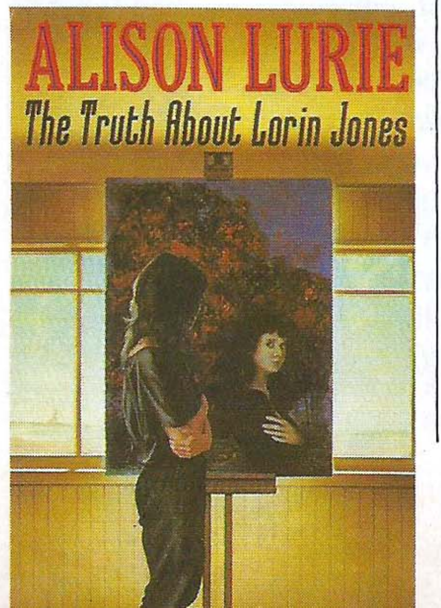
Equally absurd, and if anything even greater fun is Allen Synge's **Hunters Of The Lost Ashes** *(Arrow, £2.99)*. It's a cricket/spy/comedy of outlandish proportions which starts with the theft of the ashes and ends with Bodyline victim turned spy, Ron Marsh, and his Yellow Wombat Brigade, forcing the English team to field against an automatic bowling machine which has a revolutionary explosive device in amongst its supply of cricket balls. The plot twists and complications needed to reach this point are superbly done. For once, the blurb on the back cover is spot-on: 'The plot turns and twists like a freakish googly.' This is one of those books that makes you laugh out loud.



Still on humour, and still on cricket, there's the incomparably funny Peter Tinniswood with **Tales From Witney Scrotum** *(Arrow, £2.50)*. I wish I knew how he gets away with it – some of the Royal Family jokes would result in anyone else being locked up in the Tower. Briefly, the story revolves around a planned shindig celebrating 200 years of cricket at Witney Scrotum. But there's much more than that involved, there's Mrs Thatcher's proposed privatization of the MCC for starters, and then there's all those revelations about the stars of the game - libel writs are sure to follow.


Peter Tinniswood
TALES FROM WITNEY SCROTUM
A hilarious celebration of two hundred years of cricket at Witney Scrotum
from the bestselling author of Tales from the Long Room

The Truth About Lorin Jones *(Michael Joseph, £11.95)* by Alison Lurie is a moving novel about one women's discovery of herself via her researches into the work of a female painter who died in uncertain circumstances. It's a book that bristles with intelligent observations about feminism and about male power politics, but it doesn't merely operate on the polemic level. It engages our everyday sympathy for the agonies of a woman struggling to achieve that most basic of human rights: happiness.

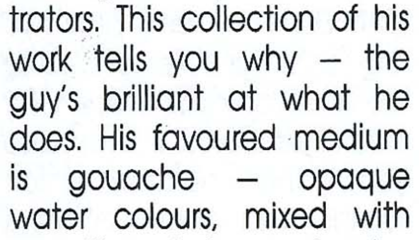


You may have noticed that Superman was fifty years old this year. One part of the summer birthday celebrations was some radio play of archive Superman from the classic 1930s American serial. If you compare that version of Superman with the one current in **Superman: The Man Of Tomorrow** *(Titan, £5.95)* written by Alan Moore, illustrated by Dave Gibbons and others, you'll be more than amazed. Even if you know what Alan Moore has done for comics in general you'll still surprised by the things that he's introduced into the Superman myth. Realism and an intense emotionality for starters. Having Superman come to terms with mortality is just one example. What's really impressive about this collection, though, is the way that Moore manages to inject a reflexive intelligence into the storyline and still stay within the basic framework of good ol' comic strip traditions. The graphic novel revolution continues ...

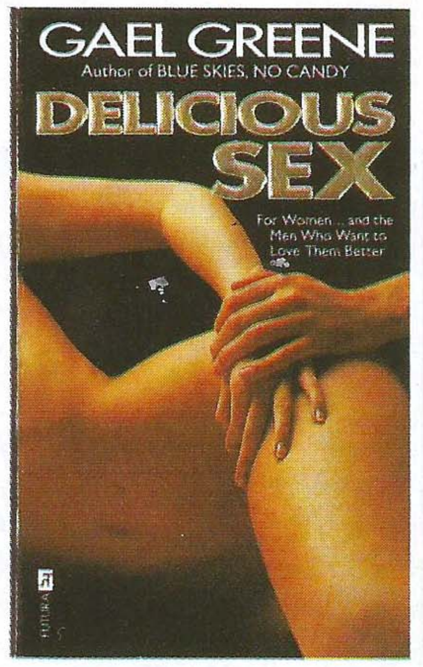
Mega-block-buster time again and another title from Dean R Koontz with **Watchers** *(Headline, £3.50)*. This is a book with a premise that sounds ludicrous – a man on the run from his own life and the emotional screw-ups therein comes across an intelligent genetically engineered dog which is on the run from a genetically engineered killing monstrosity. Dog introduces man to woman, much blossoming of romance follows before man, woman and dog (who's been taught to 'talk') have to go on the run from aforesaid monstrosity and, naturally enough, the security forces responsible for all that genetic engineering in the first place. The climax involves the man confronting his own and the woman's fears, the woman – pretty much the same, dog ditto. Man, woman and dog then have to face up to the monstrosity and the secret services. Assorted minor characters help to heighten conflict and drama at appropriate points along the way. Silly? Not really, it's actually captivating – well written and well plotted. I loved it!

Another goodie in amongst this month's titles is **Death Among Strangers** *(Headline, £2.99)* by Deirdre Laiken. There's a murder in a small American town, no-one can identify the girl involved, but accusations and gossip soon start to fly. The local cop assumes more than his share of responsibility in tracking down the culprit, his girlfriend – social worker, Elizabeth Kern - is drawn into his earnest investigations but she has her own secret to contend with: the mysterious stranger on a motorcycle who is teaching her what sex is all about and how to steal aspects of reality by 'seeing'. It's lyrical, full of suspense and keeps you guessing up until the end.

The Science Fiction And Fantasy World Of Tim White by Tim White *(Paper Tiger, £7.95)* is fairly self-explanatory. Tim White is one of our leading fantasy and SF illustrators. This collection of his work tells you why – the guy's brilliant at what he does. His favoured medium is gouache – opaque water colours, mixed with gum-like substances to give a matt surface. Knowledge of that particular fact is very humbling (at least, it is if, like me, your kids get better results from water colours than you do). He manages to get a result which in some senses is almost photographic, yet at the same time manages to be practically impressionistic. A neat trick if you can manage it.



Delicious Sex *(Futura, £3.50)* is the sort of title guaranteed to grab the attentions of any innocent passer-by. Happily, it's a book well-worth having your attention grabbed by. Written by Gael Greene, novelist and restaurant critic, it's a book about ... well, sex in all its delicious varieties. It's light hearted, deadly serious and full of info that should be helpful to anyone interested in getting more out of their sex life. I've passed it over to my wife certain passages highlighted. Some chapter headings to whet your appetite: '69 Ways to Turn You On', 'Eat to Win – Fellatio', 'Good Enough to Eat – Cunnilingus' and the absolutely wonderful '21 Thoughtful and Amusing Things to Do with a Penis'! I wonder if this Gael Greene is a friend of our very own Bette Noire?

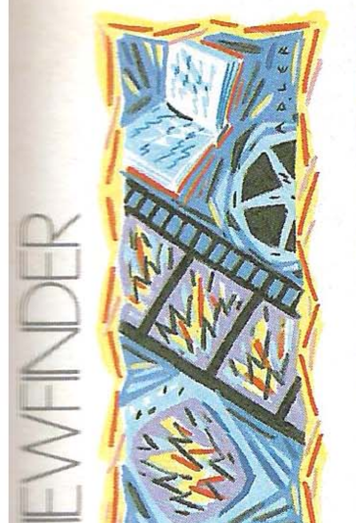

GAEL GREENE
Author of BLUE SKIES, NO CANDY
DELICIOUS SEX
For Women ... and the Men Who Want to Love Them Better
FUTURA

Suzanne Lipset's **Coming Back Up** *(Robert Hale, £10.95)* is forbidding and heart warming. It's the story of Lonnie and her recovery from rape. How the violation lingers on and intrudes on her efforts to live a normal life and develop normal relationships, how that violation effects three generations and any number of other people. It's a salutary story which might help men get some sort of insight into what rape implies.

Suzanne Lipsett
COMING BACK U

I was impressed with two beautifully weird and wonderful books, both visionary like half-waking dreams propelling you into the characters' lives and fears.

The People In The Picture *(Black Swan, £3.95)* by Haydn Middleton is the entrancing chronicle of Jasmin and the mysterious Lacy – a bald, enigmatic Welshman who comes into Lacy's life and totally puzzles her. What starts off as a fairly simple tale of interpersonal relationships, rapidly assumes stranger



Video Of The Month

It is not usually possible in this column to be absolutely bang up to date on the very latest releases, but this month's lead video comes fresh from the cinema and hits your local library right about now. And it's a cracker.

If you thought that possesion movies have become all too tired, jaded and cliched, then **Retribution** *(Medusa Home Video)* might be the video to change your mind. It is not a high-budget production, but the effort put in by the cast, technicians and ex-TV director Guy Magar have transcended financial limitations to produce a horror-thriller which is very watchable indeed.

Timid failed painter George Miller decides to throw in the towel and leaps from the roof of his shabby hotel, but as his soul passes down a tunnel to the life beyond it, meets the disfigured face of another agonized spirit which forces George back into his own body, where an ambulance crew 'revives' him.

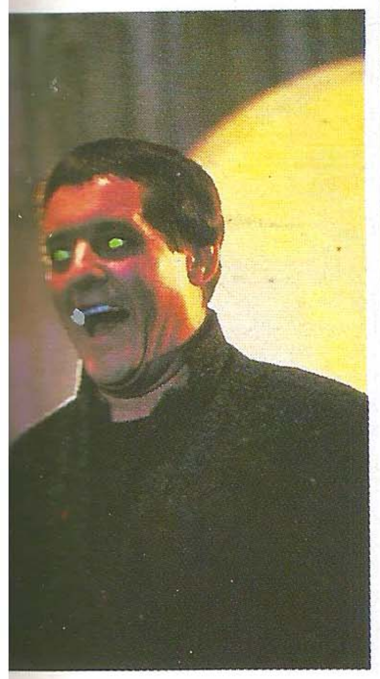
After responding well to psychiatric treatment, the withdrawn yet likeable chap is welcomed back to the transient hotel by his supportive but equally no-hoper friends. But the nightmares George experienced in hospital become even more vivid, and in his dreams he finds himself inexplicably killing people he has never met before.

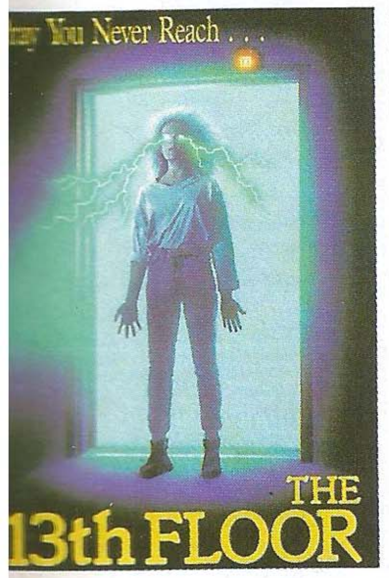
When newspaper reports bear out the fact that the grisly murders really have taken place while George was asleep, he becomes very distressed – and who wouldn't? Psychic 'instincts' lead him to a strange part of town where he discovers that a minor villain suffered a tortuous death on the same night as George's attempted suicide, that he was born on the same day as George and that the new murder victims were his confederates – probably his killers.

It begins to look as if George's wasn't the only soul to come back down the tunnel of death and enter his crumpled body...

Retribution is a highly enjoyable slice of supernatural suspense in which the gore is well counterpointed by unexpected touches of humour. Dennis Lipscomb's performance as George swinging between an unusually sympathetic, almost childlike character and a glowing-eyed psycho is an acting *tour de force.* One not to be missed.

Martyn Lester





Despite help from a social security official Heather has taken as a lover, Thompson's sadistic hired detective and henchmen track down the kids, and they are under orders to stop at nothing to get back the documents. But there's a power on the thirteenth floor that is equally unprepared to stop at murder to take its revenge...

An unspectacular but more than competent chiller-thriller which proves an amply satisfying hour-and-a-half's viewing.

Ghostly manifestations also play a large part in **Those Dear Departed,** which stars Pamela Stephenson (she of *Not the Nine O'Clock News and Superman III)* and Garry McDonald, best known as manic pseudo-TV reporter Norman Gunston. As you'd expect from the cast, this tale of the unearthly is not a horror but a comedy, and although not one to induce side-splitting belly laughs, it certainly entertains.

McDonald plays the vain and neurotic stage superstar Max Falcon, runaway successful lead in the unlikely production **Freud – The Musical** and a man on the verge of a crack at Hollywood. But Max's conviction that everyone is out to get him is not merely the result of paranoia. His wife Marilyn (Stephenson) is having it away with the chauffeur and has decided that it is time for Max to take his last bow.

But Marilyn is soon to discover that there really are such things as ghosts, and before long, a whole troupe of theatrical types she has bumped off come back to haunt her in an inept but irritating manner.

A mild but amusing black comedy with quite a rewarding performance from McDonald.

It is worth mentioning in brief that the **Star Trek – The Next Generation** tapes have now reached Volume 4 *(CIC Video)*, and if you have not yet started on this sequel series, you should be warned that it soon becomes compulsive viewing. In the latest offering, the new Enterprise crew exhibit some strange behaviour after passing through an energy field in *Lonely Among Us,* while there is a further run-in with new foes, The Ferangi in *The Battle,* where an enemy captain with a thought-altering device seeks to avenge his son's death against the starship's Captain Picard. All Trekkies should be queueing for this one down at the local library.

Finally, the time seems ripe for this column to take notice of the now massive volumes of tapes which are passing across the counter in the sell-through or 'under-a-tenner' market, and since those nice people handling *CBS/Fox* product have been kind enough to send them for review, where better to start than with **The Marilyn Monroe Collection.**

Five Twentieth Century Fox films of the Fifties starring Hollywood's most enduring legend come onto the market in this selection, namely *Niagara, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (with Jane Russell), *How to Marry a Millionaire* (with Lauren Bacall and Betty Grable), *The Seven Year Itch* and *Bus Stop.* By most people's reckoning, that covers all her best movies excepting *Some Like It Hot,* and few Monroe fans will begrudge the seven quid or so per title to add these to their collections, air-vent scene and all.

Most good video libraries will get hold of copies for you – failing that try the high street multiples such as Woolworths.

Martyn Lester

Records

The loudest, most colourful, most violent, most brash, most exuberant ... choose your own label, they've all been applied at one time or another to that R&B, turned mod, turned mega-rock band: The Who.

Who's Better Who's Best *(Polydor)* is a 'very best of...' compilation which covers the ground from the two minute 1965 debut single "I Can't Explain" through to the 1981 five and a half minute "You Better, You Bet". There's a bunch of stuff from *Tommy* plus the real classics: "My Generation", "Magic Bus", "Squeeze Box", the Beatlesque "The Kids Are Alright" and, for my money, the best songs of all: "I'm A Boy" and "Substitute".

The early singles in particular are, quite simply, brilliant. Townshend's pointed lyrics are period-piece works of sheer genius. Energy and defiance reverberate across the years. Musically tight, packed with teenage emotion and power chords, the voices and instruments play off each other flawlessly. Each song encapsulates a piece of pop history perfection. Listening to them again, you can almost forgive Roger Daltrey for his American Express TV adverts.

Gary Numan's notched up a fair number of decent singles in his time too. His latest album **Telekon** *(Beggars Banquet)* doesn't have any tracks that make the same initial impact as Tubeway Army's *Are Friends Electric?* did about a decade ago, but it does have other strengths. There's something about the chord

GARY NUMAN
TELEKON

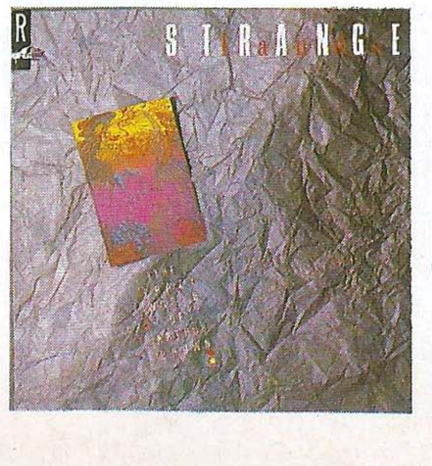
structures he works around which manages to convince you that you're absolutely guilty of something pretty damnable.

The album has a bright, breezy start "This Wreckage" with ominous synth riffs and lyrics contemplating God's death, various dark facades and the self as wreckage.

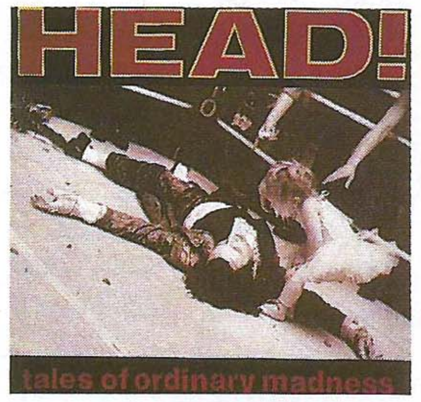
I absolutely refuse to get roped into any discussion about the relationship between the second track "The Aircraft Bureau" and Mr Numan's own legendary aeronautical skills (which must be improving, it's a few years since his last appearance on the national news taxiing his plane along the hard shoulder rather than an airport runway).

Telekon has no great surprises, and that makes good sense. He's dealing with a well defined market and a loyal fan-base. That's not to say that there's nothing else to this record than Judgement Day synthesizers. Some of the effects are quite subtle and easy on the ear. "Push No More", for instance, with its piano lead and synthesizer backing is the perfect vehicle for some plaintively bleak lyrics.

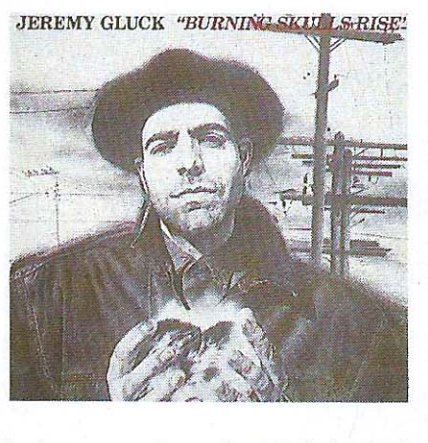
The second single I ever bought was, to all intents and purposes, the work of a raving mad hippie. Anyone appearing on Top Of The Pops wearing robes and flaming headgear has to be all right. The dude in question was, of course, Arthur Brown and the single "Fire". What did happen to him? Well, he once appeared in a Knave interview, he also pioneered the use of drum machines and influenced the rise of another costumed reprobate – Alice Cooper. But more than all this, he nipped off to Dorset in 1969 and laid down **Strangelands** – now brought to you courtesy of *Reckless* records (more from them next month, they sent me a whole bunch of hippie stuff which I can't listen to in good conscience until I get hold of a bit more Patchouli oil). *Strangelands* is a free-form blues, jazz, rock 'n' roll fusion via manic psychedelia. It's better than it has any right to be – the bluesy version of the bones song in "Planets Of The Universe" is a killer. *(Arthur was last heard of working on the outer fringes of the music business in Lubbock, Texas – the birthplace of Buddy Holly! – Ed.)*



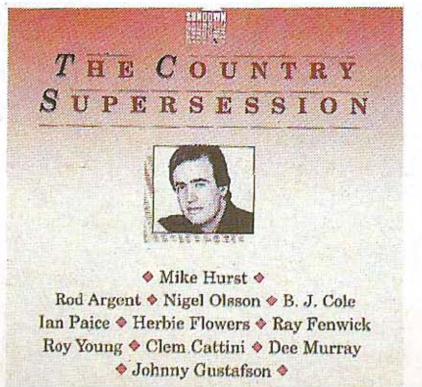
Head, with **Tales Of Ordinary Madness** *(Virgin)* should receive some award or other. They manage to be noisy, indecipherable, brash, brassy and inviting. From the chantalong 'Sin Bin' with it's sporty overtones (probably) through to the heavy rap a la Beastie Boys "Get Fishy" they ply their surreal wares. Bertie Beales' vocals are registered with amazing effect. "Jesus Ain't Got A Daddy" and "1000 Hangovers Later" are personal favourites of mine which should appeal to all religiously inclined winos.



There's been a fair amount of countryish music belting out of my overworked stereo system just recently. One example of which is the work of ex-Barracuda Jeremy Gluck on the utterly lovable **Burning Skulls Rise** *(Flicknife).* Disquieting and engrossing, it's a sort of Velvet Underground/ Nick Cave approach to country music which quotes Krishnamurti on the inner sleeve. It's more lugubrious than the Assistant Editor of Fiesta when he's had to buy a round, it's more inexplicable than the musical tastes of Fiesta's Editor. Above all, though, it's wonderful. The lyrics are downbeat tales of resignation. The music's a mixture of acoustic and electric styles with some superbly atmospheric slide and pedal-steel. This is one to play over and over again.

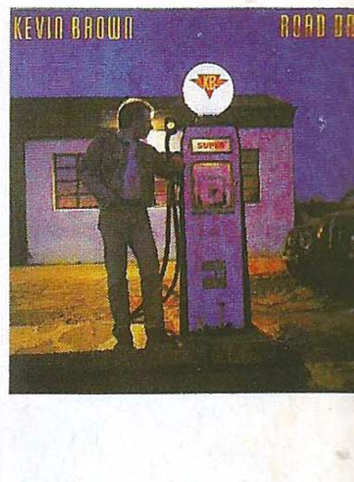


Mike Hurst has produced the likes of Cat Stevens, Manfred Mann and, um, Showaddywaddy (well, someone had to). Now he's released an album of his own self-penned material covering the period 1970 to 1979. **The Country Sessions** *(Sundown)* is the album, and it's been made with assistance from some very high-class musos. B.J. Cole's pedal steel is superb and the inputs from Rod Argent and Herbie Flowers are as good as you'd expect. As a guitarist, Mike Hurst is very good. His vocals are okay. Together they're listenable, especially when the arrangements come together – which they do for most of the record.


THE COUNTRY SUPERSESSION
◆ Mike Hurst ◆
Rod Argent ◆ Nigel Olsson ◆ B. J. Cole
Ian Paice ◆ Herbie Flowers ◆ Ray Fenwick
Roy Young ◆ Clem Cattini ◆ Dee Murray
◆ Johnny Gustafson ◆

"With The One Who Loves You", the opening track, is similar to Scott MacKenzie rather than anything more obviously country. In fact, the whole album splits roughly into two: out and out country music plus some gentle folksy stuff. The country songs make for better listening, they're not so quaint as some of the other material.

Kevin Brown was once a schoolteacher, now he's out on the road playing some mean guitar. **Road Dreams** *(Hannibal)* sums it up, the man's a romantic dreamer – he's good at it too. In some respects he reminds me of a countrified Roy Harper, there's a similar quality to his voice. And the acoustic numbers such as "Put A



Record Of The Month

How on earth can you possibly listen to the music from an offspring of a god-like musical prophet and not compare and contrast their work with that of their dads? How can the aforementioned offspring ever escape the shadow of the parent?

Bob Marley's joined the pantheon of rock giants in the sky, and reggae has never quite found anyone to replace him as a figure-head for spiritual focus. Enter Bob's son Ziggy.

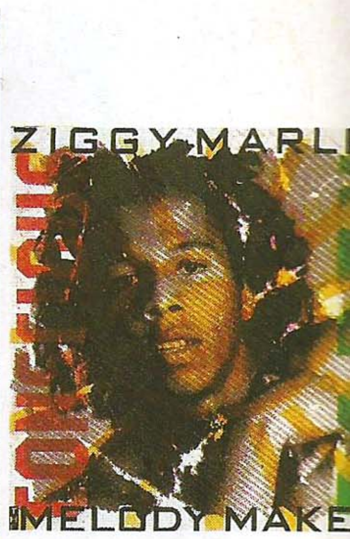
Ziggy Marley And The Melody Makers are full of good intentions and reggae beats **Conscious Party** *(Virgin)* is the album in question, and it's a real goodie. Singling out particular tracks for praise is none too easy. But "Tumblin' Down is especially praise-worthy. Dance to the downfall of global superpowers – it's a track that's more infectious than the average notifiable disease.

The album's very much an amalgamation of fabbo rhythms and laudable sentiments: screw-you advanced nations, politicians, warmongers and fascists. The music's excellent at best and never less than good.

Possibly the most potent part of the album is an African romance "Dreams Of Home" which is tragic, touching and a bloody good song. It's unlike anything else on the album, it augurs well for the future. The African chorus background vocals are magnificent.

I look forward to hearing more of Ziggy Marley!

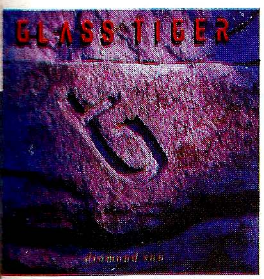
Andy Oldfield



Smile On Your Face' are gently insistent in the style of Harper at his best. The similarities, however, don't run very deep. Brown's very much his own man doing his own thing.

The country style is foremost and the slide guitar is economical and devastating. One of the traditional numbers 'Diamond Ring' is ample testimony to his musical and production skills. Elsewhere, on 'Some People', reggae influences are put to good use.

Throughout, the musicianship is solid and the song quality consistently high. There are plenty of hooks and some ingenious arrangements. Who knows, perhaps I'll buy myself some cowboy boots and become a good 'ol boy after all.



Canadian Celtic stadium rock is not a well-known phenomenon, not yet anyway. The second album from Glass Tiger could change all that. **Diamond Sun** *(Manhattan)* is a pleasant, atmospheric blend of right-on numbers and simpler love songs. The ecologically right-on tracks 'Diamond Sun' and 'This Island Earth' are the strongest on the LP – the nostalgia for a more tribal, natural existence is powerfully done. Intelligent stuff and first-rate adult rock music.

Hard-ons
dick cheese

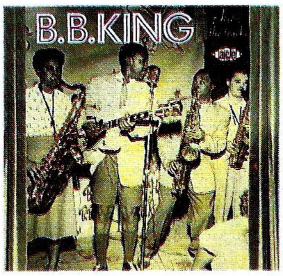
The Hard-Ons are an Australian band. However, their album **Dick Cheese** *(Vinyl Solution)* is absolutely guaranteed not be part of the official bicentennial thrash. Nonetheless, thrash is what it's all about. The Hard-Ons are a tight, fast and furious three-piece whose instruments sound like they're on a heavy speed jag. They manage to make the Macc Lads sound like a church choir. They've a strong line on song titles – previous masterpieces having included 'Surf On My Face' and 'Smell My Finger'. **Dick Cheese** features such niceties as 'Fuck Society', 'Everytime I Do A Fart' and 'Oozing For Pleasure'. There's lotsa fixations on matters excremental and squidgy orifices. Buy a copy for your mother-in-law this Christmas.

CRITTI POLITTI/PROVISION

Green Gartside always was one of rock's more articulate people. Words are definitely not lacking on Scritti Politti's **Provision** *(Virgin)*. The verbal range is quite intriguing, from 'bop-a-re-bop' and 'guzzungazzung' through a vocabulary accessible to most and on into the philosophical realms were Immanuel Kant's *Critique Of Pure Reason* may, or may not, be coming in for some deconstructivist punning.

Apart from all that, there's also quite a lot of music. Immaculately produced and executed love songs featuring some smart drum programming and slap bass. One track is outstanding 'Oh Patti (Don't Feel Sorry For Loverboy)', it's remarkable on several counts: for a start there's the melody, there's the lyric and, most of all there's some spacy trumpet courtesy of guest Miles Davis.

B.B. King's reputation as a blues' guitarist is not in doubt. Lest you think it is, pin back your ears and relax with **Across The Tracks** *(Ace)* – a masterful collection featuring some digitally remastered original tapes. Over half the titles are previously unrecorded or are alternative takes. There's a good mix (roughly half and half) of material from the fifties counter balanced by 1987 songs. Literally mind-bending, it's difficult to praise this record enough – the necessary superlatives have yet to be coined.



Speaking of superlatives brings me neatly onto **C'mon Everybody** *(Liberty)* a compilation of Eddie Cochran numbers: 'Blue Suede Shoes', 'Summertime Blues', 'Long Tall Sally', 'Three Steps To Heaven' etc. There's absolutely no need for any comment from me on these classics. Everyone knows how good they are. All I'll say is that the quality of this collection is excellent - digital remastering triumphs again.

EDDIE COCHRAN
C'mon Everybody

Andy Oldfield

Rosie Flores is the kind of country music singer who would have been big news when Emmylou Harris was just about the only hip country girl in town. These days, when the proliferation of 'new country' stars has almost reached overkill levels, Rosie is just another good new singer in a field of plenty. Her debut album **Rosie Flores** *(WEA)* is sound indeed, but has little to place it above the crowd. However, her voice is clear and true, her selection of songs is faultless, and her band have a lively West Coast flavour – she apparently learned her trade in the Los Angeles C&W bars. The names of Carl Perkins, Hank De Vito, Paul Kennerley and Albert Lee appear amongst the songwriter credits, but my favourite is her own composition 'Heart Beats To A Different Drum.' Good, but not great...

ROSIE FLORES

K.D. Lang is a country singer who, however, may well deserve the label 'great'. Her latest LP **Shadowland** *(Sire)* recreates the classic sound of Patsy Cline, the greatest of all female country stars who died tragically young back in the sixties. The album's sub-title is *The Owen Bradley Sessions* – for it was recorded at the Mount Juliet, Tennessee studio of Owen Bradley, the producer behind Cline's success story all those years ago. Bradley gives Lang's voice the big sound treatment it deserves – for here we have a voice that transcends and makes inadequate labels such as country, swing or whatever else you care to call this music. As Bradley says in his poignant sleeve notes: 'As a singer, K.D. is anything she wants to be... she has the ability to take all kinds of music and make it her own...'

k.d.lang Shadowland
OWEN BRADLEY

So, here we have ballads that echo the Patsy Cline sound with loving respect, plus lively swing numbers such as 'Honky Tonk Angels Medley' – featuring the voices of three grand old veterans: Brenda Lee, Loretta Lynn and Kitty Wells.

Instead of ignoring the traditions of country music, as so many of the 'new country' stars have done, Lang uses them as the bedrock for her own distinctive style: she does not pretend that making country music sentimental and maudlin is no longer 'the done thing.' She has, more than any other new artist, revitalised the traditional core of country music – and for that she deserves respect, attention and admiration.

Rupert Metcalf

A THING OF BEAUTY!

KNAVE FICTION

Beauty, as they say, is in the eye of the beholder. But when private-eye Paul French was hired by a renowned lady sculptor to follow her wayward husband, he should have known that there'd be tears before bed-time. In this tale of marital revenge, PAUL TOBIAS explores the darker side of a woman scorned...

Continued on page 81

ILLUSTRATION BY DUNCAN GUTTERIDGE

A THING OF BEAUTY

Continued from page 79

It was the only message on the answering machine, but the contents more than made up for that. Being a Private Detective can mean long hours, boredom, danger, and very little else. But it's what I want to do, so I'm not complaining. Occasionally, a case comes along, and I know right from the start that it's going to be both interesting and profitable. This was one of those cases.

The woman on the other end of the line had a voice that was sexy but with a hard edge to it. She didn't tell me what the case was, but said I had to be at her place at two o'clock. It was the last sentence which got me interested. "Expense is immaterial."

The address she gave me was real classy. It reeked of money. Opposite, they were putting up a new block of luxury flats. You know the type, two hundred thousand a throw, and that's only the key-money. The snooty type on the desk told me her 'suite' was on the first floor, but he looked as though he wanted to tell me to go round to the tradesmen's entrance.

The lift slid up on a cushion of air and hardly made more than a whisper. The vision who opened the door was wearing some sort of smock, and as the sun was shining through the window behind her, I could see she had very little on underneath. She was a big woman in every sense of the word, but perfectly proportioned.

"Hello," I said. "Paul French. You left a message for me to call."

Her voice matched her appearance, and it was much better than on the answering machine. "Come in."

I followed her undulating form into the room. "Come on through. I'm working."

She led the way into another room which had no furniture in it, but the floor was almost completely covered in what looked like scrap metal.

"Don't mind the mess. It's supposed to be a modern sculpture."

Something clicked. "Laura Kennington."

She smiled. "Oh, so you recognise me."

Laura Kennington was one of the best known names in the field of modern sculpture. I didn't like the stuff myself, but I'd heard the name and I know the kind of figure her work sold for. She got more for one of her pieces than I earned in ten years.

"What is it supposed to be?"

"I haven't given it a name yet, but those two large metal boxes will be in the centre of a maze of twisted metal. Like two upright pillars swathed in barbed-wire."

I could see what she meant. It was going to be revolting. My eyes moved away from the harsh lines of the sculpture, across the smooth curves of the woman in front of me, and up to her face. "You said you had a job for me."

She nodded, beautifully. "Yes. Would you like a drink before we get down to business?"

I asked for a scotch, and she took me into the next room where I watched her pour it with practiced ease. She was the sort of woman I would have liked to have met in different circumstances. Her whole body cried out to be held, from the golden glow on top of her head to the soles of her feet. I knew the parts in between were enough to drive a man insane with lust, although they were well covered and I had to guess what they were like. She brought the drinks and sat down opposite me, crossing her legs and showing a good length of strong thigh. I felt my pants tighten as I developed a sudden hard-on. What she had said about getting down to business suddenly took on a new meaning.

"I want you to follow my husband." She pulled her smock over her legs, covering them effectively, as though the mention of her husband had given her a sense of modesty. "I think he's having an affair. In fact I'm sure he is. I just need proof."

I didn't believe what I was hearing. Any man in his right mind would give his right arm and a leg to be married to a woman like this. What was wrong with him to bother about other women?

"What do you want — photographs, tape recordings?"

"I felt my pants tighten as I developed a sudden hard-on."

"No. Your word will be good enough. I am sure he has another woman, but I want an independent witness to his infidelity. Just confirm that I am correct, that's all you have to do — nothing more. You will be well paid, and I will be *very* grateful."

The emphasis on the word 'very' finally made up my mind for me. It was only after I had left that I realised I had forgotten to tell her what my fee would be. I went straight to the office block where her husband worked, and studied the photograph she had given me.

Continued on page 83

A THING OF BEAUTY

Continued from page 81

He was a little older than she was, maybe ten years, a little overweight but the type many women would fall for. I saw him leave the building at five-thirty and climb into his car. I followed at a discreet distance, but I could tell he had no idea anyone would be following him. A couple of streets away, he stopped and picked up a brunette. A nice enough girl, but his wife made her look like something from a Frankenstein film.

They went to a cheap back-street hotel and booked a double room. When they had gone upstairs, I waved a fiver in front of the desk clerk and asked if they had been there before.

"They're regulars," he told me. "A couple of hours and they'll be down again. But I don't ask any questions."

He reached for the fiver but I pulled it out of reach and tucked it into my pocket. "You wouldn't like to lose your licence, would you?" I said. "Just forget you ever saw me and keep your mouth shut."

I could tell from the look on his face that he wasn't thinking nice thoughts about me, but I also knew that, after my veiled threat, he wouldn't say anything to Laura's husband.

I made myself comfortable in my car and waited for them to come out again. It was two hours almost to the minute. The desk clerk certainly knew his customers.

I rang Laura to tell her what I had found out and she told me to go round. I didn't need to be asked twice. She opened the door to me in a flame coloured negligee that almost matched the glow in her eyes. She pulled me in without a word and led me to the settee.

"Tell me everything," she breathed. "Is he having an affair?"

I told her what I knew and she seemed satisfied. "I knew it. I knew he couldn't be trusted. But I'll make him pay. He'll never look at another woman again."

The look in her eyes and the tone of her voice told me she would be a bad enemy. But then the look was gone. She turned to me, a different woman.

"And now you. I said I would be grateful, and I meant it."

She stood up and slowly unfastened the negligee, then shrugged it off so that it dropped to the floor in a heap. She left it there as she pushed the straps of her nightdress from her shoulders. Sliding the garment down slowly, she let me savour every moment, every inch. I watched, fascinated, as her tits came into view. Twin perfect globes, firm yet soft and inviting. I drooled over them as their protruding pink nipples jutted out at me. Her waist was comparatively slim and beautifully curved down to her hips which swayed seductively as she lowered the nightdress even further. I saw that she was a natural blonde.

Then her thighs lifted one by one as she stepped out of the nightdress and kicked it to one side. She stood before me completely naked and all I could do was just stand and stare. I've had plenty of women but Laura beat the lot. She looked down at the front of my pants and nodded appreciatively.

"Mmmm! I like the look of that. Let me see it properly."

I felt, rather than saw her unfasten my belt and pull down my zip. My pants fell to the floor, quickly followed by my shorts.

Laura knelt in front of me, cradling my balls in her hands. My prick stiffened even more than it had done at the thought of her golden body. I watched in disbelief as she reached out with her tongue to touch it.

"She pulled me in without a word and led me to the settee."

She looked up at me. "You don't mind if I do this, do you?" I could only shake my head and croak out a reply. Laura lowered her head again and began to slide her tongue round and round the head of my prick, then up and down its length. I could feel my meat throbbing against her fingers as they slid along its length, her nails gently scratching the soft skin. Then, without warning, she opened her mouth and took the full length of my prick into it and down her throat. It was more than I could stand, and I instantly erupted and filled her throat with hot come. In seconds, I was drained. It was the shortest session I'd ever had, but the best without a doubt.

Laura slid her lips off me and stood up, her hot body pressed close to mine. "There. That wasn't so bad, was it?" I had to agree with her. She threw her negligee round her shoulders and saw me to the door. Just as she was about to open it, she hesitated.

"There's one last thing I'd like you to do for me. Meet my husband as he leaves work tomorrow night, and tell him I'd like him to come straight home and to bring that tart with him. Say I want to bring this thing into the open

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A THING OF BEAUTY

Continued from page 83

and get it over with."

"Do you think he'll do that?" I asked.

"Of course. He'll be so pleased that he doesn't have to hide and feel guilty any longer, he'll do anything I ask of him. And, of course," she smiled up at me and ran her fingers down the side of my face. "Once that is settled, you will get your reward."

I got out before I did something stupid, like grovelling at her feet or slobbering all over her. When I met her husband the following evening, he reacted exactly as she said he would. I watched him drive off, looking as though he hadn't a care in the world. Then I went home. I lay on the bed and wanked myself off thinking of Laura.

It was a couple of days before I got the call from her. She told me to go round that afternoon and get what was due to me. The invitation sounded interesting. When I arrived outside her apartment block, there was a large crowd dispersing. I wondered vaguely what they were doing there, but my mind was on more interesting things.

Laura opend the door to me looking like a dream. She was fully covered, but the material was so flimsy I didn't have to use my imagination to see that she was wearing nothing else. She smiled and moved aside to let me in, before closing and locking the door. Once in there, she wasted no time in useless conversation. She led me to the bedroom and began to strip me, slowly and with finesse. I helped with my pants, then unfastened her negligee and slid it from her shoulders.

We moved to the bed and climbed onto it. I started to lay her down, but she pushed me away, then eased me down into my back and threw her leg across me. Then her hot thighs gripped me, almost crushing my ribs as she held me in a vice-like grip. My prick was rigid and she had no trouble feeding it onto her dripping cunt. She pressed down on me, forcing my prick into her until I was buried deep inside. I heard her groan as her cunt walls closed around me and she began riding me as if it was her last minute on earth and she had to fuck me in seconds rather than at her leisure.

Laura took over completely. Her thighs tightened around me and she almost drove me into the bed with the fury of her attack. I held onto her pounding thighs as she pistoned up and down on my prick, but that was all I could do. She started to scream as an orgasm built up inside her and her body shuddered violently. Her tits swung rapidly across my face, hitting me solidly each time she bounced up and down. I felt my come building up and I tried to hold back but she was too much for me.

She gave one last tremendous thrust, and it was over. I filled her and felt her juices running down my legs and wetting the bed under me. Laura collapsed on top of me and I had the pleasure of feeling those marvellous tits squashing against my face.

Without a word, she climbed off the bed, walked to a dressing-table and picked up a cheque which she handed to me.

"Thanks for everything. I think that should cover it."

I looked at the cheque and whistled. It would cover my expenses for the next twelve months. "You don't believe in underpaying." Our steamy session had been short, but well worth it.

"Then I went home. I lay down on the bed and wanked myself off thinking of Laura."

Later, as I was leaving, I glanced through the open doorway of her studio and saw that it was completely empty.

"Did you finish your masterpiece?"

She smiled and walked to the window. "Yes. There it is, outside the new flats. I was commissioned by the local council to make something which would be futuristic and would fit in with the modern design of the flats. It looks rather nice, don't you think?"

I disagreed, but the thought of the cheque made me stay silent. "Did your husband like it?"

She smiled. "He wasn't keen, and neither was his slut. But they both have a different viewpoint on it now."

There was something in her voice that made me want to leave. I didn't know what it was, but the room suddenly seemed to have gone cold. I had to get out.

I paused outside and looked at the grotesque thing she had created. It was a mass of barbed-wire enclosed in a steel cage. At its centre stood the two boxes. They were upright and looked for all the world like two grey coffins. I turned and looked up at her window. She was standing there smiling, and as I looked, she waved. I thought about her husband and the girl I had sent to see her. Then I looked once more at the two coffin-like boxes, and I left — hurriedly.

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

Firmly ensconced in her role as healer of inferiority complexes, massager of bruised egos and disseminator of arcane advice, BETTE NOIRE, B.Sex (Hons), M.Sex (Distinction), P.45, battles on. Why the crusade to bring light and enlightenment to the world? Well, partly it's out of the goodness of her heart, but mostly it's because her projected book on blow jobs in a monetarist economy was turned down and she needs the money.

Confidential to **F.C., West London:** *No, your problem is anything but silly! I do question your desperate use of 'solve by mail' psy-kicks and 'absent healers', not to mention all the money you've wasted on amulets and rituals! NOT all psychics are quacks – but the majority are, and the ones who 'promise to clear you of opposing forces' for a hefty fee give the legitimate and altruistic, gifted individuals a very bad name. Bullshit, to put it bluntly, my little stray lamb, and it's all got nothing to do with finding a woman! Forget that stuff. (And I'd report your expensive medium to the authorities, if they can do anything about that sort of thing.) Why won't someone go out with you? I don't know, mate, because I don't know you. I do know that women can sense if you're desperate, or just want a good screw... There's nothing wrong with what you've been exploring, like dating agencies; (if one won't work, try another one which will interview you personally), classes (try a subject which women are especially interested in) ads (try another magazine) and pubs. There's no magic solution, I'm afraid. I do think you need some feedback, from male and female friends; you've got to have a clear idea of how you're coming across! Get a good hard look at yourself, from appearance to social graces, to who you're aiming for. Listen. Women are people. You're nice to them, they're nice back. They require the same things you do: respect, a sense of humour, real interest in what they do and who they are, intelligence, sensitivity... human, basic stuff. Be relaxed with them (no matter what you're feeling inside). Have you asked friends to fix you up with a friend, then perhaps the four of you go out? Start with this, then report back, and we'll take step two.*

Q: Is it possible for a vasectomy to be reversed? — L.K., (Harlow).
A: Ah, the tie that binds... It depends, to some extent, on the surgical technique that was used to begin with. For the kindest cut of all – if one of the cut ends of each vas (the vas deferens release the sperm to the urethra, sports fans) is left open, and not cauterised or tied off, the chance of a reversal is increased. The operation takes 3-4 hours, requires real technical skill, and things still aren't guaranteed, as low sperm counts are a real possibility – plus, a man's immune system can actually produce antibodies to his own sperm after the op... that's why vasectomies are to be considered permanent, although a small percentage can be reversed. Techniques are changing, though, so have a talk with a consultant.

Q: I am a slim, attractive guy who finds fat women get me really horny — especially big boobs and bums. My friends think I'm a little odd, because they go for the "Cindy Doll" type. Do you think I'm grotesque or strange? I also worry that fat women may find me too slim. Do you think they might accept an unmacho guy? — V.C., (Ipswich).
A: Horses for courses... answer one: Who is anyone to judge what you or anyone else finds attractive? I know a man who likes women so skinny that ribs stick out, so there you are. Voluptuous women everywhere would be delighted by you, believe it. This mania for 'Cindy' type figures – a relatively recent phenomenon, given the history of such things, after all – has reduced many a female to despair, as they're hardly made to feel sexy or desirable these days. So more power to you. And where is it carved in stone that fat women want fat men? They have their own preferences like any other figure, for heaven's sake. If you think your skinniness turns any woman off, either put on a few pounds or get into shape with what you've got. And a lot of women prefer unmacho men. Unmacho doesn't mean wimp. It usually means a man so secure in his own masculinity that he doesn't have to overdo things, or try so hard... macho is boring, one-dimensional and macho is also fear – fear of letting the other sides of being a man come out. So go for it! (You can always keep your preferences to yourself, if you've got sniggering friends.) Rowf!!

Q: I really enjoy sex and can climax with little or no trouble during intercourse. However, I can't come during oral sex — which my boyfriend loves to do to me. Any help you can give would be appreciated. — D.H., (Guildford).

A: Just goes to show how different women can be – a lot of women have the reverse trouble! Some women need vaginal or breast stimulation or clitoral... sounds like you should make use of what already works for you. Ask your friend to insert a few fingers into your vagina during oral sex – it'll enhance things.

Q: What do you think of those condoms that have ridges and bumps on them? Do they really have any advantage over the smooth kind? I admit I'm curious to try them, but if they look stupid on me, then maybe it isn't worth it! — T.R., (Llandudno).
A: Well, if you apply the same reasoning as to tyres... the added grooves and bumps improve traction a bit. (If you had trouble in that area!) The rubber that goes bump in the night also may be more stimulating to your lady or ladies, around the outer third of her vagina (the inner two thirds won't feel it), and the clitoral area, so you might want to concentrate on externals, especially. These kinds of fun condoms are for the couple with a sense of humour and experiment about sex – which makes for better action, anyway. But I wouldn't expect marked difference in your orgasm-rating, if that's what you're after. But you won't look like an idiot if you wear one. Of course, you might want to warn a new partner before you suddenly don one with feathers and spangles which plays 'God Save the Queen' on insertion...

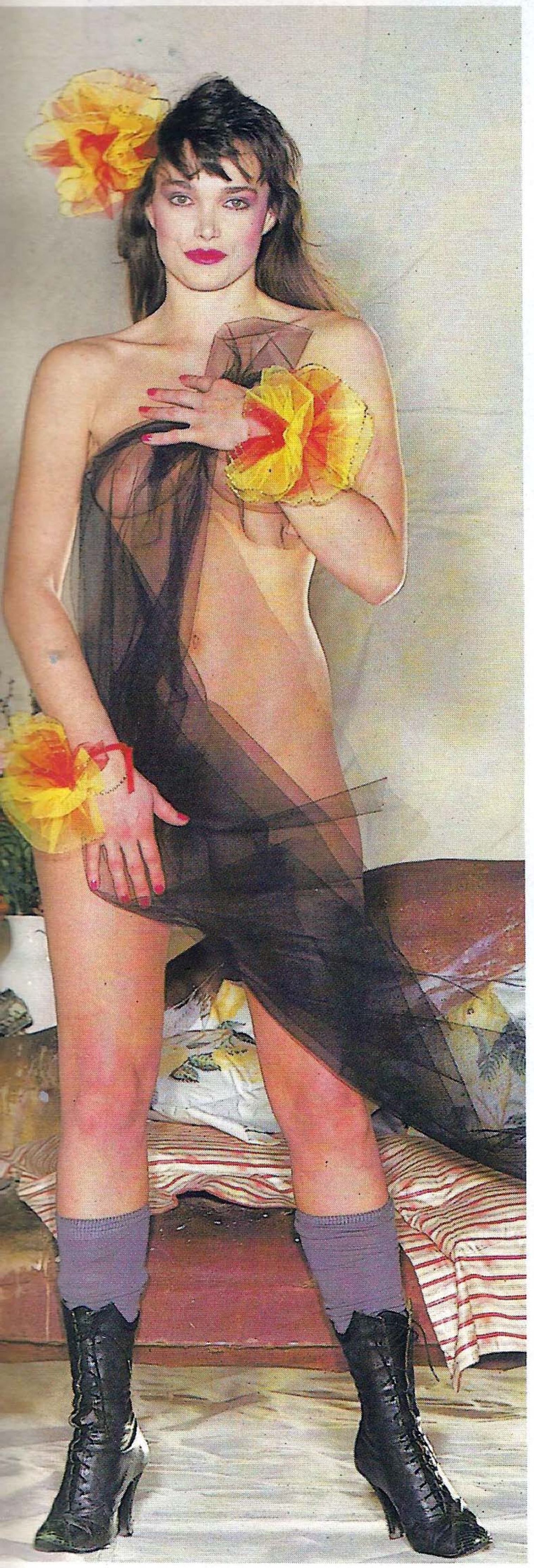
Q: Is there any problem with giving a woman oral sex when she has her period? — M.W.,(Fife).
A: Nope – just keep the fancy tongue work a little on the gentle side. It's admittedly rare, but it's possible that if sex (of any variety) gets too vigorous around that area, air could enter the bloodstream (embolism), which could conceivably be fatal. Moral: don't force air into the vagina, that's all. Then again, you presumably don't treat her like a balloon, so... any advice not to puff or pump should be superfluous!

Problem? Reasonable questions answered. If unreasonable, they'll either get trashed or passed around for a smirk or a laugh in the office! Write to: What's Your Problem? Knave, P.O. Box 312, Witham, Essex CM8 3SZ.

ANNA

Heads up, peeps, here's Anna, modelling a new style of hair-net (geddit?). Anna is a lady with a mind of her own, which makes a change around here. Not for her the faithless bonds of marriage bliss — she's single and intends to stay that way — pity!

Anna, it says here (no, I'm not going to pretend that I'm intimate with this one — she's bigger than me), is a bit of a brainy lass, too. More A-levels than our beloved Editor's got stretch-marks, and she's a qualified private investigator into the bargain. We should have known — a clever dick!



PHOTOGRAPHED BY SIMON HURST

CLOE

Gadzooks — it's another one of those simple sets (lovingly created by our simple set-designer out of anything he could find on the local Oxfam shop) which really gave poor Cloe as much to work with as I have.

INGRID

Splish-splash, here's another wet one for you ancient mariners (or 'old seamen' as we in the business say). Ingrid's time in front of the lens was another of those happy coincidences where she happened to be in the right place at the right time. So, off to New Zealand we trekked, where we found Ingrid frolicking in the surf like she didn't have a care in the world. You're probably wondering where she got the melon from. So are we...

PHOTOGRAPHED BY NICK GURGUL

Okay, she's a little belter with a penchant for things black and lacy, and an interest in flower-arranging. I'd be fibbing if I said she'd ever see the bright side of 19 again, but she's not *that* far off it and holding out pretty well, methinks. The set, on the other hand, cost us all of two bob and sort of arranged itself. You can't win 'em all!

PHOTOGRAPHED BY GERTH SERNELIN

Ingrid is 22-years old, and was born in Singapore, where her dad worked for the High Commission. After returning to Britain, she enrolled at stage school and, following that, appeared in several productions in the provinces. Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on your point of view) she had to take her clothes off in most of them. The rest, as they say, is history...

JACQUI

Ye gods and little fishes — what brought this on? Actually, Jacqui wasn't meant to be appearing in these pages as a model. We found her whilst clearing out our Beloved Editor's wallet. It seems she's the last remaining survivor of a lost civilisation which lay undisturbed for thousands of years. Jacqui tells us that the rest of her tribe died out when the Great Rubber came and blotted out the sun. What large chunks of latex might be doing in El Gutto's wallet are anyone's guess! By the way, all this is as true as I'm sitting on this shark...

PHOTOGRAPHED BY AUSTIN LEGREW

KRISTIN

Ah, this is a bit more like it. A scenario with a bit of class to it for a change. We got on the Galaxy tandem and pedalled off to Kristin's own country retreat in Kent for this. Of course, there are certain people (I can't name names, but see pages 4 to 6) who think a country retreat is running away from the farmer after being found in a compromising situation with his prize heifer!

Back to the girlie. Kristin (pronounced *Krees-tahn)* lives in a renovated mill with her cats and Irish Setter, Rambo. Rambo, it seems, is quite content to spend his evenings curled up at the bottom of Kristin's bed. Wonder how I'd look in a headband and combat trousers?

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SIMON HURST

JACQUI

MAGGIE

Maggie is probably no stranger to some of you aficionados of the female form — she's appeared in Knave a number of times in days past. Now, however, is time to set the record straight — forget the others and believe this next bit.

MARIE HOPE

AMATEUR MODEL

A lot of girls do it – how about you? If you want to become one of our Amateur Models, fill in the form at the end of this feature and send us some rude photos of yourself. Polaroids will do, at least two completely nude – front and back view.

Displaying her womanly charms for the first time this month, is Marie, getting it on (and getting 'em off!) in these rather avant-garde surroundings. Check out the yards of silk and the suspicious-looking plant and then tell me we don't have an eye for the abstract.

During the day, Marie works for a well-known television company as a researcher. She's the one who's responsible for chat-show hosts enquiring after the health of their guest's recently deceased mother and featuring portraits of seventeenth century royalty in medieval dramas.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOHN COPTHORNE

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ULF STJERNBO

Maggie started her professional career as an usherette in her local cinema. Very quickly, though, she got sick of drinks-on-sticks and people throwing peanuts at her. Now, she's moved on to drinks on the house and working for peanuts! It's a tough old life!

WANTED GIRLS!

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!

Knave is always on the look out for likely lasses for our Amateur Model of the Month feature! As long as they have not previously appeared in Knave, Fiesta or any other men's magazine, girls are eligible for our Amateur Model feature. All we want is three or four nude prints or polaroids, and the completed application form. We choose the girls we like, and invite them to our studio in Essex for a full day's modelling session, with a professional glamour photographer behind the camera and our make-up and hair stylist in attendance to make the girls look their best. We pay our Amateur Models £200 for their day's work at our studio, and we pay £25 to the photographers for sending us their polaroids or prints. A career in glamour modelling could start right here...

MODEL'S NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

DAYTIME TEL. NO. ....

DATE OF BIRTH ....

SIGNATURE ....

PHOTOGRAPHER'S NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

DAYTIME TEL. NO. ....

DATE PHOTOS TAKEN ....

SIGNATURE ....

TO: KNAVE AMATEUR MODEL FEATURE, PO BOX 312, WITHAM, ESSEX CM8 3S